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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/707,111	11/06/2000	Susan Day	200-1618	8194

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EXAMINER

REAGAN, JAMES A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3621

DATE MAILED: 04/05/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/707,111

Applicant(s)

DAY ET AL.

Examiner

James A. Reagan

Art Unit

3621

MLW

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 November 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1. This action is in response to the application filed on 06 November 2000.
2. Claims 1-16 have been examined.

Information Disclosure Statement

3. The Information Disclosure Statement filed on 15 April 2003 (paper #2) has been considered. An initialed copy of the Form 1449 is enclosed herewith.

Claim Objections

4. Claim 1 is objected to because of the following informalities: There appear to be typographical errors in the claim limitations that distort the intent of the claims. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1, 2, and 4-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mora et al. (US 6,161,113 A) in view of the Applicant's own admission.

Examiner's note: Examiner has pointed out particular references contained in the prior art of record in the body of this action for the convenience of the Applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply. Applicant, in preparing the response, should consider fully the *entire* reference as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

Claim 1:

Mora, in column 1, lines 13-18 discloses, "*Collaboration software*, also referred to as *groupware*, is a type of computer software designed to enable workgroups and individuals to collaborate and share knowledge regardless of geographic boundaries and time restrictions," essentially disclosing more than one disparate group collaborating on a project in a "virtual room" (such as is provided by Lotus Notes), and the limitation of *receiving from one member of the first members and the second members an issue document*. In at least column 6, lines 18-47, Mora discloses project document security, effectively disclosing *restricting dissemination of the issue document to the reviewer*. In addition, Mora discloses security features of a document such as who has access rights to edit a document, essentially disclosing *a list identifying potential reviewers*

for the issue, (see at least column 7, lines 36-42). Security procedures concerning a document inherently disclose *identification of a reviewer for the issue* (see at least column 7, lines 36-42). Applicant, in the background of the specification discloses program and project management and collaboration tools such as Lotus Notes and Lotus Domino, the use of e-mail to send messages over a LAN, WAN, or through the Internet, using homepages and hyperlinks, separate organizations which are required to communicate over a distance with regard to a collaborative project, and security restrictions concerning access to corporate intranets. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the Applicants own admission regarding the current collaborative project management environment with Mora's project management notebook because enhancing the structure and communication abilities of remotely located project teams across a range of distances allows groups to readily and efficiently share and approve related documents and issues, keeping projects on time and reducing wasted time and expense.

Claim 2:

With regard to the limitations of:

- *receiving from the reviewer and escalation approval; and*
- *escalating the issue document to a management function;*

Mora, in column 10 lines 52-67, discloses senior executive review, essentially disclosing the hierarchical approval process, which send issues and documents to senior management after approval at the project manager level.

Claims 4, 5, 6, and 7:

With regard to the limitations of:

- *forwarding a notification to the reviewer;*
- *the notification comprises an electronic mail message;*
- *including in the notification a link to the issue document within the virtual team room;*
- *the link comprises a hypertext link,*

Mora, in at least column 24, lines 1-10, discloses notifications. The Applicant, as shown above, discloses email messages and hyperlinks. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the Applicants own admission regarding email and hyperlinks with Mora's use of notifications because using an email message with an embedded link and/or hyperlink is an efficient way to send documents to reviewers, as well as providing a link to the work space in which the group meets and shares ideas and documents.

Claim 8:

With regard to the limitation of *the first members are linked to the virtual team room environment by a first network and the second members are linked to the virtual team room environment by a second network, disparate from the*

first network, as shown above both the Applicant and Mora disclose project management environments i.e. Lotus Notes and groupware, as well as the Internet, corporate LANs, WANs, and intranets, and messaging, inherently disclosing that two separate groups may be linked to a common environment across separate and distinct networks.

Claims 9-14:

With regard to the limitations of:

- *the first network comprises one of a secure network and an unsecured network;*
- *the unsecured network comprises the Internet;*
- *the secure network comprises a local area network;*
- *the second network comprises one of a secure network and an unsecured network;*
- *the unsecured network comprises the Internet;*
- *the secure network comprises a local area network;*

The combination of Mora with the Applicant's own admission as shown above discloses LANs, WANs, intranets, and the Internet. Mora/Applicant do not specifically disclose secured and unsecured networks, but the Applicant, in the background of the specification, discloses security restrictions that limit access to information management systems between organizations, naturally disclosing that each corporative entity maintains a secure and trusted network within its own organization. The Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old

and well known in the computer networking arts to establish a secure LAN or WAN in a corporate environment to prevent theft, fraud, and abuse of sensitive corporate information. In addition, it is well known that the Internet in general is considered an unsecure network, with smaller secured networks contained within and adjacent to the Internet.

Claim 15:

With regard to the limitation of *the virtual team environment comprises a team work tool supported on a server*, as shown above both the Applicant and Mora disclose project management environments i.e. Lotus Notes and groupware, as well as the Internet, corporate LANs, WANs, and intranets, and messaging, essentially disclosing a computer server.

Claim 16:

With regard to the limitation of *providing a security server coupled to the virtual team environment and verifying the identity of the first and second members using the security server*, the combination of Mora with the Applicant's own admission as shown above discloses LANs, WANs, intranets, and the Internet. Mora/Applicant do not specifically disclose identity verification of team members, but the Applicant, in the background of the specification, discloses security restrictions that limit access to information management systems between organizations, naturally disclosing that each corporate entity maintains a secure and trusted network within its own organization. The Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the computer networking arts to

establish a secure LAN or WAN in a corporate environment to prevent theft, fraud, and abuse of sensitive corporate information, as well as requiring the use of authentication procedures such as, for example, user ID's, passwords, and biometric verifications and authentications.

7. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mora/Applicant in view of Srinivasan (US 5,548,506 A).

Claim 3:

The combination of Mora with the Applicant's own admission discloses the collaborative project management environment as shown above. Mora/Applicant do not specifically disclose *the potential reviewers comprise a leader of the virtual team room and a delegate of a leader of the virtual team room*. Srinivasan, however, in column 3, lines 6-8 and 30-32 discloses task leaders and project leaders, as well as a hierarchy of leadership positions in the program. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Mora/Applicant with Srinivasan because establishing various leadership positions within a project team delegates authority while ensuring that multiple tasks are completed on time on within other project constraints.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **James A. Reagan** whose telephone number is **(703) 306-9131**. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **James Trammell** can be reached at (703) 305-9768.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the **Receptionist** whose telephone number is **(703) 305-3900**.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

(703) 305-7687 [Official communications; including

After Final communications labeled "Box AF"]

(703) 308-1396 [Informal/Draft communications, labeled
"PROPOSED" or "DRAFT"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451
Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 7th floor receptionist.

JAR
02 April 2004

